



TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to changes in legislation		
Last Review	September 2023	Kindergarten Head
Approved	September 2023	Kindergarten Head

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Thomas's Kindergarten EDI Policy, Equipment and Resources Policy, Most Able Policy, SEND Policy

Aims

At Thomas's Kindergarten we undertake to:

- create a happy, secure and nurturing environment for the children, parents and staff.
- develop the children's confidence through social interaction and play
- provide a stimulating and interactive learning experience
- encourage independence through opportunities in the broad curriculum
- foster open lines of communication between home and school
- cultivate a growth mindset enabling children to embrace challenges, persevere and build resilience
- develop children's emotional literacy and promote overall well-being through mindfulness activities, and the personal, social and emotional curriculum, which is at the core of our practice

Ethos

The ethos and atmosphere underpin the agreed aims of the school. The Kindergarten will provide a broad and balanced curriculum based on the [Early Years Foundation Stage Framework](#), which will develop the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary for learning.

Staff will contribute to the development of this ethos through:

- providing an effective learning and play environment at all times, in which each child can achieve his or her maximum potential
- providing a welcoming environment, in which courtesy, kindness and respect are fostered

- providing a fair and well managed environment in line with the Kindergarten's Behaviour Management Policy
- providing positive role models
- maintaining purposeful and informative planning and record keeping in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements
- valuing and celebrating children's efforts, successes and achievements
- reviewing personal and professional development and undertaking appropriate training to ensure a high level of professional expertise
- developing links with the wider Kindergarten community to ensure children appreciate that they are part of a community mosaic

Equal opportunities

In accordance with the Thomas's Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Policy, all children must be given equal access to teaching and learning. Staff will endeavour to help all children to reach their maximum potential irrespective of race, gender, age or ability.

Communication and Language

Thomas's Kindergarten is committed to supporting all children to develop communications skills and master the English language. Staff are experienced in supporting children's speech and language needs, through: every day interactions and play, phonics sessions, group learning times and free flow learning times. This enables children to become skilled at speaking and listening.

This also helps children to become more confident and competent when communicating in English. It encourages them to listen more actively and talk for a range of purposes and draws particular attention to the links between oracy and literacy.

The School Day

Times of the school day

Arrival: 0845

Dismissal: 1145 or option to remain for afternoon session, 1200-1500 (Mon-Thur)

Afternoon sessions are available to children who have turned 3, or at the discretion of the Head. Afternoon sessions are subject to availability for children in Lower Kindergarten.

Time allocation

The children in the Kindergarten progress through the Early Years curriculum with time allocated to all areas of learning before going on to their next school. Work is planned using the DfE guidance [Development Matters \(2021\)](#) and there is a child centred approach to learning through play.

The Kindergarten Environment

The Kindergarten environment is managed so that it is as inclusive as possible. This facilitates different learning styles and all abilities. The learning environment should allow for:

- large group sessions
- small group activities
- one-to-one teaching
- collaborative learning in pairs or groups
- independent learning

The layout of the learning environment is appropriate for maximum exposure to the curriculum. Children have sufficient space and appropriate size and style of furniture and the space is suitably lit, heated and ventilated.

The outdoor learning environment is valued by children, staff and parents. The provision outside differs from that inside. The outdoor environment is set up for learning which is most exciting and impactful outdoors. For example, developing gross motor skills, understanding the world and PSED, although these subjects are not limited to being taught outdoors.

Resources

We believe that high quality Early Years care and education are promoted by providing children with safe, clean, attractive, developmentally appropriate resources, toys and equipment. We aim to provide children with resources that help to consolidate and extend their knowledge, skills, interests and aptitudes.

In order to achieve this we:

- provide a balance of resources and equipment which can support a range of activities across all areas of play, learning and development;
- provide play equipment and resources that are safe and, where applicable, conform to the BS EN safety standards or Toys (Safety) Regulations (2011);
- provide sufficient quantity of equipment and resources for the number of children;
- provide resources that promote all areas of children's learning and development, which may be child or adult led;
- select books, equipment and resources that promote positive images reflecting all cultures and abilities, are non-discriminatory and avoid racial and gender stereotyping;
- provide play equipment and resources that promote continuity and progression, provide sufficient challenge and meet the needs and interest of all children;
- provide man made, natural and recycled materials that are clean, in good condition and safe for the children to use;
- provide furniture that is suitable for children and furniture that is suitable for adults;
- store and display resources and equipment where children can independently choose and select them;
- regularly check all resources and equipment and ensure they are put away at the end of the morning and afternoon session;
- repair and clean, or replace, any unsafe, worn out or damaged equipment;
- plan the provision of activities and appropriate resources so that a balance of familiar equipment and resources and new and exciting challenges are offered;
- make sure unwanted equipment/resources are given away to charity or are recycled;
- provide staff/children with information on how to use equipment/resources

The Kindergarten is equipped with a basic set of resources and books appropriate to the age range and area of learning. These resources are added to during the year on an ongoing basis. All members of staff are involved in choosing and selecting new equipment through discussions and staff meetings.

Children will be taught how to use all resources correctly and safely, with care and respect, with regard for Health and Safety and avoiding unnecessary waste. Care will be taken to ensure that resources reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of our society, and that all children have equal access.

- Resources will be well-maintained, tidily organised and easily accessible.
- Children will be involved in the care of all equipment and resources.
- Technology will be used to enhance teaching.
- Children will have a variety of resources to explore, investigate, initiate and role play.

More able children

We believe that every child in the Kindergarten has the right to receive our assistance in achieving their full potential, including children who are more able. We believe that supporting the most able children is the responsibility of all staff with support from the Leadership Team.

The Kindergarten aims to create a climate in which success is valued by everyone and where individual differences are accepted. This will involve:

- A more able register for both year groups
- The identification of the particular needs of able children in all our planning
- The provision of appropriate resources
- The encouragement of children to be independent in their learning and taking ownership of their own learning. This will include the provision of opportunities for them to organise their own work, access the resources they need, work unaided, make their own choices about work, evaluate what they are doing and be self-critical
- Celebration of achievement
- Regular reviews between Leadership Team and key teachers to identify reasons for underachievement of more able children and implement strategies to address their needs

Where a child is identified as being 'exceptionally able' the Kindergarten will provide them with suitable enrichment. 'Stretch and challenge' will be identified through progress discussions to help facilitate the child's learning and enjoyment of the specific area of talent. Key teachers will liaise with the parents to assist with teaching strategies and ways that they can help enrich their child's learning through opportunities outside of the Kindergarten with external agencies.

In the Kindergarten

It is important to establish what prior knowledge, understanding and skills the children have so that we are not wasting time or demotivating the child by unnecessary repetition or duplication.

We are aware of the danger of assuming that gifted children are easier to teach than other children. Our aim is to:

- provide appropriate challenge through high quality tasks for enrichment and extension which will always be available (providing for different starting points and not “more of the same”) growing out of the subject/topic being studied by the whole class
- extend childrens’ thinking skills through effective questioning, open-ended challenges and higher order thinking skills activities
- plan work so that extension tasks are always available for able children, allowing for flexibility to adapt to changing needs/directions
- differentiate appropriately through stimuli, resources, tasks, outcomes and responses
- provide wide variety in what we prepare for the children and in what we ask them to do for us
- set individual targets, not group targets
- encourage children to become independent learners by:
 - carrying out unaided tasks which stretch their capabilities
 - making choices about their work
 - developing the ability to evaluate their work and so become self-critical
 - taking ownership of their learning

We also provide:

- a range of afternoon activities
- educational visits
- recommendations to outside agencies and experts

Children who have English as an additional language

We aim to welcome and value the cultural, linguistic and educational experiences that children with EAL bring to the Kindergarten. We will implement school-wide strategies to ensure that EAL children become confident and fluent in English in order to be able to fulfil their academic potential.

Within the Kindergarten teachers should:

- recognise the child's home language; boost the child's self-esteem. Remember, he/she has the potential to become bilingual.
- ensure classrooms need to be socially and intellectually inclusive, valuing cultural differences and fostering a range of individual identities.
- identify the child's strengths and interests.
- acknowledge the time it takes to become fluent in an additional language, with a good command of the range of language needed for academic success.
- differentiate for EAL children during carpet times, small group work and day to day interactions.
- provide a range of opportunities for children to engage in speaking and listening activities in English with peers and adults
- recognise that EAL children need more time to process answers.
- allow children to use their home language to explore concepts.
- give newly arrived young children time to absorb English (there is a recognised 'silent period' when children understand more English than they use - this will pass if their self-confidence is maintained).

- build on the child's experiences of language at home, and in the wider community, so that their developing use of English and of other languages support each other

Responsibilities

The Head is responsible for:

- obtaining, collating and distributing to the members of staff information on new children with EAL. This includes:
 - language(s) spoken at home.
 - from the previous kindergartens, information on level of English used.
 - details of curriculum at previous setting (where applicable).
- ensuring that:
 - all involved in teaching EAL learners liaise regularly.
 - parents and staff are aware of the Kindergarten's policy on children with EAL.
 - relevant information on children with EAL reaches all staff.
 - training in planning, teaching and assessing EAL learners is available to staff.
- overseeing initial assessment of children's standards of English.
- informing parents of relevant documentation and or referrals.

The class/subject teacher is responsible for:

- being knowledgeable about children's abilities and needs in English and other subjects.
- using this knowledge effectively in curriculum planning, classroom teaching and grouping.
- providing opportunities for their child to use their home language in their sociodramatic play.

Planning

Planning is organised in weekly and termly documents. We use the EYFS Framework and Development Matters as resources in the planning of the Kindergarten's learning. Sessions are evaluated on a daily and weekly basis and we respond to the children's needs and interests accordingly. Through focus groups children actively contribute to planning on a weekly, and sometimes daily, basis.

Record-keeping and Assessment

Regular assessments, observations and tracking of each child in all areas of learning are made of children's development to establish a level of attainment and to inform future planning. Record-keeping documents are kept and shared with parents and carers via Arc Pathway

Parents receive a formal written report at the end of the Summer Term. They also receive feedback on their child's progress at Parent-Teacher meetings in the Michaelmas and Lent terms. Frequent updates from teachers and the Kindergarten weekly news from the Head are shared via TomCom.